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ENG 5500 001: Writing Center Practicum

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ENGLISH 5500: Practicum in Writing Center Theory & Practice

Friday 1-3 pm in the Writing Center (Coleman Hall 3110)

This practicum is a seminar in the theory and practice (*praxis*) of writing center consulting. Each week, we will discuss readings and issues related to your work in the writing center.

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Attendance and Participation

Because we talk about important issues for our community of practice, because much of the work done in practicum is collaborative, because you are serious scholars & professionals, and because you receive one course credit for this course, it is reasonable to expect you will attend—on time—every class session. *If an emergency arises, contact Dr. Kory and Dr. Smith as soon as possible via email or phone.*

Of course, you are expected to come to class with all books and other materials, prepared to contribute to a lively informed discussion of assigned readings.

Assessment, Evaluation, and Grades

You will receive written and oral feedback on your performance in this class, the written work you submit, and your work as a consultant in the writing center. You will not receive a letter grade for this course: the options are “credit” or “no credit.”

Overview of Assignments

Here is a summary of the assignments and activities you will complete by the end of the fall term:

- Monitoring + Participation in Discussion Group on Facebook
- Responses to Practicum Readings
- Observation Memos
- Genre Show & Tell presentation
- EIU Writes Blog Post
- Philosophy of Writing Center Consulting

Description of Assignments

Posts on the EIU Writing Center Facebook page

The EIU Writing Center Discussion Group on Facebook is one of many places theory and practice will co-mingle. We will post announcements, schedule changes, etc., *so check in regularly*.

We will also use this space to reflect on experiences and articulate questions or insights.

The **deadline** for the first post of the week is noon Wednesday. A second post in which you reply to or interact with the content of another post should appear by 10:00 a.m. Friday.

Formal Responses

Most weeks you will compose a formal written response in which you analyze and reflect on concepts, strategies, and issues presented in one of the assigned readings as part of the development of your praxis and philosophy of Writing Center consulting.

This 300-500 word response—which may have an assigned focus, audience, genre, or citation format—should focus on an aspect of the essay or article that seems worthy of careful analysis and detailed response: a key point, a significant feature of the author(s)’s research methods or approach, an assumption implicit in their argument, a tactic or strategy they advocate. Use summary to provide context for your discussion of key passages, which should be quoted or paraphrased and cited.

Your analytic response should include consideration of both theory and practice: to what extent do these ideas align with what you have learned about peer tutoring, and to what extent they are reinforced—or complicated—by situations you have encountered as a writing consultant.

Observation Memos

At least twice this semester you will write a memo following your formal observation of a session facilitated by one of your Writing Center colleagues. Submit these memos electronically to the consultant observed and provide electronic copies to Drs. Smith and Kory (as a “cc”).

These memos should have a four-part structure:

- 1) Describe the arc of the session and key moments within it to the consultant you observed
- 2) Identify tactics, strategies, or moves that struck you as effective or appropriate, and anything else you learned from watching his or her work with this particular student writer
- 3) Focus on specific moments of *kairos* in which the consultant responded effectively to the demands of the moment—and describe a teachable moment s/he may have missed
- 4) Offer one specific suggestion or observation that your colleague might build upon.

Before you observe... do ask your colleague if there is anything they would like you to focus on—agenda setting, listening skills, body language, clarity of examples/explanations, wait time, etc.

EIU Writes Blog Post

On a pre-arranged schedule, you will compose and revise one post for the EIU Writing Across the Curriculum program’s public blog, *EIU Writes*. This can be an interview; mini-lesson; writing-related reflection; or discussion of on an issue, practice, or truism about writing or the teaching of writing.

Genre Show & Tell

Since the writing center serves writers taking courses across the college curriculum, it behooves us to be familiar with the genres and documents that are characteristic of particular fields, disciplines, and professions. Therefore, each member of the class will make a presentation focused on a specific type or genre of document that is used in specific rhetorical situation or discourse community.

For this assignment, do NOT focus on literary genre (e.g. drama, poetry), "school" genre (e.g. "research paper"), or "modes" that reflect a specified rhetorical aim ("informative," "persuasive," "narrative").

Here are examples of genres and documents that respond to the demands of a particular rhetorical situation or reflect the methods and outcomes of specific disciplines or discourse communities:

- Marketing report
- Graduate school application essay
- Lab report
- Bad-news (sensitive) memo
- Lesson plan
- Business proposal
- Social-science essay (IMRD format)
- Job application letter
- Annotated bibliography

Here are questions you can use to examine the genre or document and its discourse community¹:

- **Type:** What is the significance of the name of this genre? What type of document is this?
- **Scene:** Where and when (in what situations) does this genre typically appear?
- **Subject:** What sorts of topics, issues, problems and questions does the genre address?
- **Rhetors and Audience:** What are the roles of typical writers and readers of this document?
- **Purposes:** To what end do people write in this genre? What makes this type of document useful, interesting, or effective for its readers?
- **Patterns:** What specific features of style, format or approach are particular to this genre? What makes it different or similar to other written documents?
- **Discourse Conventions:** What is the level of formality for this genre? What's important to note about syntax, sentence structure, and organization?

For your presentation, prepare a properly documented handout in which information is organized by the questions above. You also should offer a sample or model document we might be able to use during consulting sessions. The written material provided should be detailed enough to fuel discussion of practical strategies for working with students who must produce writing in this genre.

Philosophy of Writing Center Consulting

Your personal philosophy—the principles that support your practice as a consultant—will emerge as a synthesis of the ideas and experience you bring to the Writing Center, ideas and approaches you develop through experience, and the research and scholarship we discuss.

This document will serve as a capstone for this seminar, and provide a starting point for your evolution as a consultant during the spring semester. This document might also influence the philosophy of teaching writing that you will develop next semester at the end of English 5502 (Mentored Composition Teaching), which will be part of your application packet if you apply to teach independently in the second year of your GAsip. (Detailed Assignment Sheet to come.)

¹ These questions are adapted from *Scenes of Writing* by Devitt, Reiff, & Bawarshi (93-94).

Week One: To Do List**Writing Center**

- Make an appointment to meet with a writing consultant colleague by noon Thursday to get feedback on a draft of your essay about the lessons to be learned from your Best/Worst Writing Experience.

Facebook Discussion Group

- ASAP: Accept invitation to secret Discussion Group for Writing Center consultants on Facebook. Also "like" EIU Writing Center public page.
- By Wednesday: write a post about intriguing or useful resources and artifacts you discover in the Writing Center (photos encouraged)
- By Thursday evening, post a reflection about the consultation appointment at which you discussed your writing experience essay. Did anything about this experience surprise you? What was the most useful aspect of this session for you as a writer? Describe what you took away from that session—whether that was something about writing or something about being an effective writing consultant. Add any thoughts about ways the Writing Center might improve.

Practicum – meets every Friday (except Fall Break, 10.13) 1pm – 3pm

- Review the ENG5500 syllabus + prepare to discuss these readings at practicum Friday 1pm – 3pm. Note points to ask about or discuss.
 - Two chapters from *The Bedford Guide* provide an overview of fundamental concepts: "Inside the Tutoring Session" & "Tutoring Writers through the Writing Process" (BG 11-51)
 - A reading from *ESL Writers*: "Breaking Ice and Setting Goals," Bruce (ESL 33-41)
 - "Tutoring Writing is Performing Social Work is Coloring Hair: Writing Center Work as an Activity System," Carter (xerox)
- Revise Best/Worst Writing Experience essay.
Bring 2 copies to practicum.

Calendar Note

The Writing Center opens at 9 am Monday 21 August and closes at 1 pm the last day of classes, Friday 8 December. We are *closed* school holidays, breaks, Finals Week.

Schedule

Key to Reading Assignments

ATG = *A Tutor's Guide* (2nd)

ESL = *ESL Writers* (2nd)

MLA = *MLA Handbook* (8th)

= handout, link, or .pdf

BG = *Bedford Guide for Writing Tutors* (6th)

LG = *Longman Guide to Writing Center Theory & Practice*

APA = *Pub. Manual of the Amer. Psychological Assn.* (6th)

opt. = optional

Orientation

"Talking in the Middle," Harris

"The First Five Minutes," Newkirk (also LG 302-315)

"The Writing Center as a Workplace," Ryan & Zimmerelli (also BG 1-10)

EIU Writing Center Handbook

Practicum Reading & Writing Assignments

Week 1: 8-25

Meet with at least one WC consultant for a scheduled session

"Breaking Ice and Setting Goals," Bruce (ESL 33-41)

"Inside the Tutoring Session" (BG 11-27) + "Tutoring Writers through the Writing Process" (BG 28-46)

"Tutoring Writing is Performing Social Work is Coloring Hair: Writing Center Work as an Activity System," Carter [*Praxis* 3.2 (Spring 2006)]

Best/Worst Writing Experience essay due

Week 2: 9-1

→ ALL STAFF meeting (starting at 2:00); at 2:15 we meet with Dr. Gail Richard, Director of STEP Program

"Principles of MLA Style" (MLA 3 - 58)

"Reading an ESL Writer's Text," Kei Matsuda and Cox (ESL 42-50)

OR "Looking at the Whole Text," Staben & Nordhaus (ESL 78-90)

Writing Across Borders (video)

Response to one ESL reading due (use MLA citations)

Week 3: 9-8

Before Friday: Take CLAST (test + answer key at front desk)

"Can You Proofread This?" + Appendices A-D (ATG 140-158)

"Addressing Genre in the Writing Center," Clark

APA Manual (pp. 65-78)

Response to Genre Essay due (APA citations)

Pitch Genre Show & Tell topic to Dr. Smith or Dr. Kory next week

- Week 4: 9-15 # “‘You Can’t Get Anywhere Without Relationships’: Marginality & Mattering in the Writing Center,” Shelly
“Toward a Fair Writing Center Practice,” Grimm
(on-line) “Reader’s Guide” & one link from “‘Going there’: Peer Writing Consultants’ Perspectives on the New Racism and Peer Writing Pedagogies”
Response to Essay of your Choice due (APA citations)
Sign-ups: Blog Post due date + Genre Show & Tell presentation
- Week 5: 9-22 → ALL STAFF Safe Zone Training, from 2:00 - **4:00** (note extended time)
“Talk to Me: Engaging Reluctant Writers,” Harris (ATG 23-33)
“*Kairotic* Moments in the Writing Center,” Taylor, Kory et al.
Genre Show & Tell:
Response due: Draft or describe your own section of the *Kairos* essay
- Week 6: 9-29 “What Line? I Didn’t See any Line,” Wingate (ATG 9-16)
“Organizing Ideas: Focus Is the Key,” Trupe (ATG 98-106)
“Helping Writers to Write Analytically,” Rafoth (ATG 107-14)
Genre Show & Tell:
Observation Memo due
- Week 7: 10-6 “Raising Questions about Plagiarism,” Bouman (ESL 161-175)
“Reading: Securing Its Place in the Writing Center,” Horning OR
“Reading with a Purpose in the Writing Center,” Carillo
“Plagiarism,” “Self-Plagiarism,” “Quoting and Paraphrasing” (APA 170-173)
“Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty” (MLA 6-10)
Genre Show & Tell:
Response due
- Week 8: 10-13 Optional Opportunity: Eastern Illinois Writing Project (EIWP) Fall Institute Day
Fall Break: no practicum meeting
Observation Memo due
- Week 9: 10-20 “A Balancing of Efficiency and Exploration: Tutoring Writers in Advanced Classes,” Zemliansky (ATG 85-97)
“In this article, I argue...” (TETYC)
Genre Show & Tell:
Response due

- Week 10: 10-27 # “All Writers have More to Léarn,” Rose
“Listening in/to the Writing Center: Backchannel and Gaze,” Santa
“The Idea of a Writing Center,” North (LG 63-78)
Genre Show & Tell:
Response due
- Week 11: 11-3 # “Queering the Writing Center,” Denny
Genre Show & Tell:
Response due
- Week 12: 11-10 → ALL STAFF Meeting starting at 2:00, then at 2:15 we meet with
Abbey Lesko-Youngberg, Acting Director Student Disability Services
“Learning Differences,” Dunn
“Revision Strategies of Student Writers and Experienced Adult Writers, Sommers
OR # “Composing Practices of One- and Multi-Draft Writers,” Harris
Observation Memo
- Week 13: 11-17 Re-read at least one influential essay or book chapter from the syllabus
“Redefining Our Existence: An Argument for Short- and Long-Term
Goals and Objectives,” Barnett (LG 194-201)
Genre Show & Tell:
Philosophy Pre-Writing due (see prompt)
- Thanksgiving Break*
- Week 14: 12-1 **Peer Review** of Philosophy of Writing Center Consulting
“Tutoring Writing as Career Development,” Kiedaisch
Bring two copies of *draft* Writing Center Philosophy
- Week 15: 12-8 **Philosophy of Writing Center Consulting due**
Spring Semester Scheduling